

Eco-Community Dialogues Newsletter

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The Conservation Pledge

I pledge to protect and preserve the natural resources of the planet Earth, and promise to promote education so we may become caretakers of our air, water, land, forest, and wildlife.

Become as Little Children

The WORLD ECONOMIC SUMMIT in Davos, SWITZERLAND, was attended by academics and business leaders who shape regional and global industry agendas. *Matthew Schofield* with the DAILY TIDINGS, reported from *Berlin*, that the rules are being bent toward the exclusive interests of 85 people who control the same wealth as half the EARTH's population, according to a report issued by the British-based anti-poverty charity OXFAM. The richest 85 have a concentrated wealth of \$110 trillion, which is 65 times more than all the resources of the world's poor 3.5 billion bottom half.

What the world needs now is a child's look from a different angle. Four summers ago a six-year old piped up and said "I'd like some yellow daisies, I'll show you some" and led *Amy Sitze*, Editor of GARDENING HOW TO, over to a window that overlooked the neighbor's yard full of bright yellow DANDELIONS.

The DANDELION (*Taraxacum officinale*) is an organic farm survivor because it attracts pollinating bees and aphid-destroying ladybugs. As one of the earliest sources of reliable nectar in the spring, DANDELIONS are essential to honeybees. Sooner or later the 85 richest people in the world may become as little children smiling to see DANDELIONS popping up, because DANDELIONS mean the survival of the bees. The deep taproots of DANDELIONS help break up compacted soil. The feathery plume full of DANDELION seeds is a blessing to Man, not a curse to be sprayed with biopesticide toxins.

DANDELION blossoms, leaves, and even the roots are edible in salads and make a good substitute for arugula, chicory, curly endive, or escarole. If you don't want to eat DANDELIONS, just mow over them or dig them out with a tool designed to extract the long taproot.

(Sources: July/August 2009's issue GARDENING HOW TO, Volume 14, Number 4, Issue 79, "Garden Talk different eyes" by *Amy Sitze*, the Editor and Executive Director, amy@gardeningclub.com, www.gardeningclub.com, 800.324.8454, and "Pest Watch Dandelion" by Elizabeth Noll

The TOBBACO RINGSPOT VIRUS

Commercially cultivated bees pollinate about 90 crops worldwide and the bee industry is valued at \$14 billion annually. CALIFORNIA's \$3 billion almond industry spends \$239 million a year to rent more than a million beehives.

The UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (U.S.D.A.) pathologist *Yau Ping Chen* at the U.S.D.A. Agricultural Research Service laboratory in MARYLAND was lead author of the study recently published on line, in the journal *BIO*, alleging that the U.S.D.A. has just now accidentally discovered TOBACCO RINGSPOT VIRUS leaps from flora to insects. It leaps from plants to honeybees.

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Scientists warn that the virus acts as a “quasi-species” replicating in a way that produces ample mutations to subvert host immune response. The study notes that the phenomenon drives recurring infections of HIV, Avian flu, and Swine flu. The pathogen is pollen-borne and the RNA virus replicates inside its *Apis Mellifera* hosts and spreads to mites that travel from bee to bee.

(Source: January 22, 2014, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, “Mutating Plant virus fingered as bee colony-collapse cause” by Geoffrey Mohan, from the LA TIMES)

“Memes and Temes” by Susan Blackmore

There's a must see video at www.ted.com entitled, “Memes and Temes” by Susan Blackmore. The TED Talk posits that the newest memes, called temes, are already replicating, and speculates about the future of humans when the new temes' replication out-accelerates human hosts. Temes are portrayed through a rose-colored lens by the newly released movie “Her” that's playing in theaters. Your discussion group might want to see both and compare.

Franken Trees in OREGON

The 2013 TREE BIOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE, was held in NORTH CAROLINA this past summer. The agenda was all about how to make trees grow faster and produce fiber more quickly than Mother Nature does. But the sterile promises of *Genetically Modified Organisms* in corn and cotton have brought forth superbugs and superweeds that plague the biopesticide hoax of betterment.

Maybe you'll think about how genetically altering EARTH's flora upon which Life has been symbiotic for millennia seems to be a detrimental idea. You may or may not call it cursed, but you get the drift. Can you imagine the parable of Jesus and the fig tree as timely for our society.

OREGON has become a biopesticide hotbed for *Genetically Modified Organisms* (GMO's). Marketing distortion bias promulgated by the “*Biotechnology Industry Organization*” of lobbyists have been pushing GMO propaganda upon policy makers and the public for two decades. But the scientist who formerly wrote the EPA guidelines, Dr. Ramon Seidler, has retired in Jackson County, OREGON, and is currently challenging alleged benefits of GMO dogma because in real-time the hypothetical GMO promises have been scientifically proven to be incorrect.

Unfortunately for AMERICA, biased legislators threw the precautionary principle to the wind. It's scary that 633 GMO test permits were issued in OREGON a couple years ago, making the OREGON fourth ranking in the number of GMO biopesticide plants permitted overall in AMERICA.

Alas GMO permissiveness may spell extinction for the U.S.D.A.'s “*Certified Organic*” farmers, and ruin for the U.S. national forests if the unjustifiable bias continues to have derelict environmental impacts. You might want to think of GMO food and GMO forests as AMERICA's *Achilles Heel* or the opening of a *Pandora's box*, since GMO trees are already in production in the PACIFIC NORTHWEST. Did you know there are monoculture timber plantations on the *Klamath National Forest*. Environmental scientists warn that the seeds or pollen from two million acres of industrial tree farms are able to cross pollinate the U.S. national forest. Hello *Homeland Security*, the U.S. soil has been invaded and our national assets of food and forest are at issue because genetic engineering is gone rampant.

The biological diversity of the *Klamath-Siskiyou* wild forests may be lost to GMO cross contamination in the near future. Natural trees will have no defenses against the GMO pest resistant trees introducing havoc rather than harmony with the laws of Nature. The *Franken Trees* may spread like wildfire when the winds blow. You have a voice, because the measure was already on the ballot for May, 2014. *KLAMATH SISKIYOU WILD* pleads for Jackson County, OREGON, voters to pass **Measure 15-119** to ban GMO plants, including GMO trees, from Jackson County.

(Source: Winter 2014, K.S. WILD NEWS, THE JOURNAL OF THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU WILDLANDS CENTER, www.kswild.org, www.rogueriverkeeper.org; K.S. Wild office, P.O. box 102, Ashland, OR 97520, 541.488.5789; K.S. Wild office, P.O. Box 654, Selma, OR 97538)

Our Family Farms

A political action committee called OUR FAMILY FARMS COALITION has formed to help organic farmers join forces together to plead for voter support for the passage of Jackson County's **Measure 15-119 on the May ballot**. OSHALA FARM's *Elise Higley*, is Director of the Coalition asking voters to please oppose the devastating threat that *Genetically Modified Organisms* (GMO) crops pose to organic farming.

Intense spraying of biopesticide crops makes leased fields off limits for future organic farming because it kills soil microorganisms. The biopesticide chemicals get into the local air, water, and soil. It takes years to rebuild poisoned soil and SYNGENTA AG's toxic engineered crops are banned in their own country, yet the agrochemicals have been sowing right down the street from organic seed savers.

Local GMO invasion by SYNGENTA AG seed and pollen ruins organic seed saving, thus economically endangering our local communities. Instead of being able to thrive, our OREGON organic growers are threatened by GMO cross pollination. Saving pure genetic seed is a fundamental right of organic farming. The right to be seed savers is a public safety issue of local, as well as prime human rights concern, because farmers such as *Chris Hardy* of VILLAGE FARM in *Talent* will lose organic certification if VILLAGE FARM's organic seed is fouled by SYNGENTA's intrusion into our neighboring farmlands.

OUR FAMILY FARMS deserve their fundamental right to be seed savers because their very livelihood is what's at stake. FAMILY FARMS include BLUEBIRD FARM in *Williams*, FRY FAMILY FARM and a dozen other farms near *Medford*, OSHALA FARM, VILLAGE FARM, WHISTLING DUCK FARM, and farms in the *Applegate*. They sell their organic produce at Saturday Farmers' Markets, to CSA home deliveries, and to upscale local restaurants. They host farm tours, weddings, dinners, and summer camps. Often they work seven days a week from sunrise to sunset during the growing season because they actually have a love affair with the land.

OUR FAMILY FARMS abide by the principle of growing local seasonal fruit and vegetables without chemicals and pesticides, and their eco ethos includes caring for wildlife, soil, education, and community. They go out of their way to give to the EARTH, so the EARTH gives back to them. Seed saving is the key to their independence and future.

Contrast that with the agrochemical FARM BUREAU's bad attitude expressed by their biased spokesperson, *Ron Bjork*, whose GMO farm in *Eagle Point*, puts OUR FAMILY FARMS at risk. *Jackson County* voters are likely to feel rankled over *Bjork's* selfish insensitivity.

The truth is that *Marin*, *Mendocino*, and *Trinity* counties in CALIFORNIA, the big island of HAWAII, and the garden isle of *Kauai*, HAWAII counties have already banned GMO crops because their organic farms needed protection. *These have all figured out how to monitor and enforce their safeguard measures. Possible for them, possible for Jackson County and the state of OREGON to protect OUR FAMILY FARMS just like 65 countries already do.* It is prudent to pass agricultural safety bans that safeguard against pervasive and persistent problematic GMO seed and pollen.

In fact the elders of organic farming from all across AMERICA and CANADA met together recently at ESALEN INSTITUTE, in CALIFORNIA, to discuss what they know and how to pass their organic farming knowledge on to the next generation. A MAINE farmer and the FIELDS OF PLENTY author, *Mr. Ableman*, organized the event. The agrarian elders of the sustainable food movement warn that the organic farming situation in AMERICA is a national emergency.

A documentary of the event is being made by *Deborah Garcia*. Her previous films include THE FUTURE OF FOOD and THE SYMPHONY OF THE SOIL. It's time to wake up to the crisis at hand. To be certified organic, food must meet the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE's regulations regarding how animals are fed and treated, and how produce is grown.

The time has come to safeguard OUR FAMILY FARMS in order to avert a consumer crisis. With 20 to 65 percent of the U.S. population shopping for organic food, it is urgent and important that **Measure 15-119** in Jackson County, OREGON, because AMERICA needs domestically produced organic food for organic consumer supply. There's no reason why there can't be six protected counties in the entire U.S.A. It doesn't make sense for AMERICA to import organic food from countries like CHINA when counties like Jackson County have valuable local and organic family farms that are an asset to communities and to the nation.

(Sources: January 23, 2014, THE MAIL TRIBUNE, "*Farmers debate GMO ban, Organic farmers support banning genetically modified crops in Jackson County*"; Farm Bureau spokesman questions *the risk*" by Damian Mann; January 25, 2014, NEW YORK TIMES, "*The Elders of Organic Farming*" by Carol Pogash, Big Sur, CALIFORNIA)

OREGON'S High Profile for 2014

According to Katy Coba, Director of the OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, the *Genetically Modified Organism* (GMO) issue is the highest discussion profile in OREGON this New Year. Because unauthorized GMO seed and pollen brought on a federal investigation of the state, it remains the key issue. There was federal focus upon the incident of unapproved GMO wheat being discovered in OREGON last year. Right now Governor Kitzhaber's task force is focusing the discussion on taking a concentrated look at having a statewide GMO regulation policy.

Katy Coba posits that Governor Kitzhaber signed the September Special Session legislation, passing a statewide preemption of any local regulation of GMO products—with the exception of Jackson County's **Measure 15-119**, so that voters in that county can decide.

The OREGON LEGAL JOURNAL asserts that Katy Coba admits the OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE must address how insensitive to their neighbors the biopesticide GMO industry is. Counties in HAWAII and other communities are raising the same environmental and human health concerns.

The biopesticide threat to OREGON agriculture is high profile because of ongoing state and federal investigation of human health impacts related to aerial pesticide applications in Lane County's Triangle Lake area.

Curry County, OREGON, constituents have petitioned the federal government to come in and do a similar analysis. The pesticides may be endangering human health in Curry County as well, so the issue is emotionally charged, as a very high profile issue.

Prevention of illness is getting high profile attention in 2014. That means the *Food Safety Modernization Act* is a key issue. Food borne illnesses are preventable. Food safety is an incredibly important federal issue this year, because growers have caused illness to U.S. citizens.

GMO/GE foods and their destruction of our environment and health has become a moral issue, so the state DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE awaits an initiative to be filed in OREGON requesting required labeling of GMO food be required.

The POP Campaign, with its MOMS4POP base, has officially requested a labeling hearing in the SENATE, supporting the women of the SENATE to take the lead to make history by getting our food properly labeled.

MOMS4POP is requesting a special, first of its kind label to warn pregnant and nursing moms of the dangers GMOs/GE foods pose to fetal development and mother's milk consumed by nursing children. To stay informed about educational outreach, visit www.POPCampaign.org and www.MOMS4POP.org.

The nutrition label is now 20-years old and dietary guidance and the food environment has changed, admits *Michael Taylor*, the FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION's (FDA) Deputy Commissioner of the past two decades.

The GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION is trying to push through their agenda because of the fast track legislation's secret minimization of all environmental and human health concerns. But the American People value freedom so U.S. consumers growing demand for required labeling of GMO ingredients is NOT going to go away. The perfect time to require GMO identification is when the FDA updates the nutrition label of packaged foods, isn't it Mr. Taylor.

(Sources: January 16, 2014, OREGON LEGAL JOURNAL, "Oregon Department of Agriculture Director assesses Oregon agriculture 2014: Interview" with Katy Coba, Director of the OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Press Release; Volume 34, Issue 1 HEALING OUR WORLD, "Updates in the Battle to Enforce Labeling of GMOs/GE Foods" by Rudhi Lenardi; www.POPCampaign.org and MOMS4pop.org; January 24, 2014, THE OREGONIAN, "FDA mulling changes to nutrition facts label" by Mary Julonick, the Associated Press)

Be in the Know about GMO's

A third generation farmer, Mr. Vlieger, co-authored and led the study entitled, "The feeding of GMO and non-GMO grain to hogs for their lifetime as a meat animal". The author is on tour all across AMERICA. AMERICAN farmers experience chemicals consequences from growing biopesticide crops and livestock. You are invited to please come hear his two presentations about the food you eat.

JANUARY 28, 2014, at 7:30--the SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY campus at 1250 Siskiyou Boulevard, in the Stevenson Student Union's Rogue River Room.

JANUARY 29, 2014, at 7:30 --the MEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY at 205 South Central, in the library's large meeting room.

(Sources: www.californiagrango.org; www.labelgmoss.org; www.momsacrossamerica.com; the SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY's Sustainability Coalition and the university's ECOS student groups; and www.gmofreejacksoncounty.com)

Organic Seed Growers' CONFERENCES

JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 1, 2014, in Corvallis, OREGON. **The Biennial Organic Seed Growers Conference** hosts include *Organic Seed Alliance*, *OREGON State University*, *Washington State University*, and *eOrganic*. There will be a pre-conference *Tour of Organic Seed* on January 30th, sponsored by the *Oregon Tilth*. The Tour will visit organic seed farms and processing facilities in the heart of the *Willamette Valley*. To register for the Conference and the Tour, see www.seedalliance.org.

FEBRUARY 12 – 15, 2014, at the *Exhibition Centre Nuremberg*, GERMANY. The **BioFach Germany** is the world's leading *Trade Fair for Organic Food*, featuring the whole range of products from the global organic sector. See www.biofach.de.

FEBRUARY 27 – MARCH 1, in Lacrosse, WISCONSON. The **MOSES Organic Farming Conference** is the premier organic gathering in the Midwest. See www.mosesorganic.org.

Save the Date

The GMO hypothesis is flawed according to direct evidence presented by *Dr. Ramon Seidler*, who formerly wrote the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) biosafety guidelines and worked for the EPA for two decades. He is listed by CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY as one of the top 2000 scientists in the world and has authored many scientific books.

You have the chance to spend an entire evening together with *Dr. Seidler* and voice what your presenting problem or desired outcome is. Be thinking about your specific goal, why you are seeking that goal, what your plans are beyond having achieved that goal, and how you expect to benefit from the passage of Measure 15-119 establishing a GMO free *Jackson County*. Come share what's in it for you as part of the local economy. Bring your family and friends. Invite your neighbors, and please come. For example, *Marin County* doubled their happiness, prosperity, and empowerment for their local organic family farmers by banning unbeneficial GMO plants. If you think you can't, you can't, *but if you think you can, you can*.

MARCH 21, 2014, at 5 p.m. --the SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY campus at 1250 Siskiyou Boulevard, in the Stevenson Student Union's Rogue River Room.

(Sources: The SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY's Student *United Nations* club, Director Kathleen Gamer at 541.621.3299; Dr. Ramon Seidler 541.601.9955)

Pop Quiz

Where is the nearest cell tower for your mobile phone carrier?

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